



HQ AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB TX



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Bush delivers \$2 trillion budget

\$70.7 million sought for S.A. military projects

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Bush sent Congress a \$2.23 trillion spending plan Monday that would accelerate tax cuts to bolster the weak economy and overhaul some of the government's biggest social programs.

It also would give NASA a modest increase and shower billions of additional dollars on defense and homeland security.

"We have moved to secure the nation's safety," Bush said.

Even though hundreds of other government programs would be squeezed, the deficit still would hit record highs of \$304 billion this year and \$307 billion in 2004 under the plan.

Over the next five years, deficits would total \$1.08 trillion.

Bush's budget plan for fiscal 2004, which begins Oct. 1, is expected to set off months of heated debate in Congress.

Democrats attacked the tax cuts as a boon for the wealthy that will do little to help the economy but will rob Social Security of the money needed for baby boomers' retirements.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., said the new budget showed the president was "leading the most fiscally irresponsible administration in history."

Rep. Charles Rangel, the top Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee, said Bush's budget showed how far the country had moved from projections two years ago of a \$5.6 trillion surplus over 10 years.

"Since then, deficits have replaced surpluses, war has replaced peace, and the economy has lost 2 million jobs," said Rangel, D-N.Y.

In his budget documents, Bush blamed the deficits "on a recession and a war we did not choose."

He said his budget would impose "spending discipline" through such efforts as reshaping the government's big health care programs, Medicare and Medicaid.

"The budget for 2004 meets the challenges posed by three national priorities — winning the war against terrorism, securing the homeland, and generating long-term economic growth," Bush said in his budget message to Congress.

"Overall, I think it is a reasonable, attainable budget. That is where Congress ought to start," said Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas.

The budget includes \$158.5 million in military construction projects for Texas.

Most of the project money would go to Lackland AFB in San Antonio, where the Air Force has proposed a 300-room dormitory and another 200-room dormitory for its operation.

Total cost of the Lackland projects: \$57 million.

The Air Force also is seeking \$13.7 million to replace 96 family housing units at Randolph AFB in San Antonio.

S. A. Express-News

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Bush delivers \$2 trillion budget, Con't.

At Laughlin AFB near Del Rio, replacing a truck fuel facility is expected to cost \$4.6 million.

There were no Navy, Air Force or Army projects for the Coastal Bend facilities near Corpus Christi.

The president's budget fails to fund Amtrak at the \$1.2 billion that railroad officials say is needed to keep the system

running. The Bush budget offers \$900 million.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, called the president's proposal inadequate.

"While Amtrak needs reform, we cannot continue to starve the system and expect improvements in service and performance," Hutchison said.

San Antonio is served by Amtrak's Texas Eagle, which runs to Chicago, and by the Sunset Limited, which travels from California to Florida.

Nationally, attention was focused on NASA's budget, prepared before Saturday's Co-

lumbia disaster.

Bush's plan would give NASA a 3 percent increase to \$15.5 billion. The shuttle budget for 2004 would receive a slightly larger percentage increase of 4.7 percent, taking it to \$3.97 billion.

In its management assessment of NASA, the administration said of the shuttle program: "Shuttle operations are well managed but investments to improve the shuttle suffer from inadequate planning and poor cost management."

White House budget director Mitch Daniels said it was too early to say what spending

changes the president would recommend in light of the Columbia accident.

"The president is committed to moving forward in space. He has made that plain. His budget makes that plain," Daniels told reporters at a budget briefing.

"If there is a lesson in the last couple of days, I suppose it is another sad example that more money alone can't always avoid very sad setbacks," he said.

Gary Martin of the Express-News Washington Bureau contributed to this report.



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Sheppard AFB, TX



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Local response to shuttle muted

**By Larry Gittings and Jeff Hall, Times Record News
February 3, 2003**

Although hundreds if not thousands of military personnel, law enforcement officers and disaster specialists from around Texas are being mobilized to help in the search for wreckage of Saturday's space shuttle disaster, few of them are coming from the Wichita Falls area.

Only a trickle is coming from the north Texas area, officials said Monday.

The space shuttle Columbia disintegrated over Texas as it made its approach to landing at the Kennedy Space Center in south Florida Saturday morning, killing all seven astronauts on board.

Most of the wreckage landed in a wide swath of southern and southeastern Texas, centered near the Nacogdoches area.

Rhonda McCombs, the health and safety officer for the local chapter of the American Red Cross, said Monday two people from the Wichita Falls area went to Nacogdoches on Saturday.

Lt. Col. John Skinner of the public relations office at Sheppard Air Force Base said Monday base personnel have been on stand-by since the disaster Saturday morning, but no one has been assigned to help comb the rugged terrain in southeast Texas for debris from the shuttle.

"When this occurred, Gen. (Arthur) Rooney put our search and rescue teams on stand-by, but we were never called up," Skinner said.

Perhaps the biggest call-up of local personnel is from the region's Department of Public Safety offices. Lisa Block, a public information officer at DPS headquarters in Austin, said Monday hundreds of troopers, including several from north Texas, are involved in the recovery efforts.

"We have 313, approximately, troopers going to help search for pieces of the shuttle and to keep order in the area," Block said.

A number of North Texas residents heard the noise of the sonic booms made by pieces of the space shuttle Columbia entering the atmosphere and a few reported seeing vapor trails Saturday morning, according to various law enforcement agencies.

However there were no confirmed reports of debris falling in the area.

The Texas Department of Public Safety office in Wichita Falls had no reports of any debris linked to the shuttle being found in the area.

Olney Police Department dispatcher Dorraine Slaughter said. "We had a handful of reports that they had heard a boom or something like an explosion."

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Local response to shuttle muted, Con't.

Olney is 55 miles southwest of Wichita Falls.

"One person reported hearing something like a car running into someone's house," she said.

There were some reports of seeing it fall out of the sky, Slaughter said.

Elsewhere in Young County, a sheriff's dispatcher in Graham reported a few callers reporting "a faint noise."

The noise in Montague County, sent deputies to see if there had been a crash at the airport near U.S. 81, but they found nothing, said a sheriff's office dispatcher.

An Archer County Sheriff's Office dispatcher reported receiving reports from a few people hearing a blast.

However, a dispatcher with the Jack County Sheriff's Office reported no calls.

The same was true for Wichita County and in Wilbarger County.

In Oklahoma immediately north and west of Wichita Falls, there were no noise reports in either Frederick or Waurika.

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AETC Bases News Clips

Maxwell AFB, AL



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Guard unit deploys for duty

By Alvin Benn

Montgomery Advertiser

BRUNDIDGE -- With homeland security duty on the horizon, 160 members of an Alabama National Guard maintenance unit stood at attention Saturday afternoon as national and local leaders wished them well.

Col. John Loden, who directs a support group out of Mobile, told them that their mission may not reflect what they normally do, but it's just as important.

Instead of repairing tanks and trucks as they did 12 years ago in Saudi Arabia, members of the 900th Maintenance Co. will be walking guard duty and handling other security directives at Air Force facilities in Alabama.

"Soldiers are being called to protect our homeland," Loden said as about 200 relatives stood around the troops at the local National Guard Armory. "An evil force has penetrated our shores. Evil has shed American blood on American soil."



Spc. Colby Cotton is hugged by his sister Lenze Morrison Saturday after the deployment ceremony for the 900th Maintenance Co. of the Alabama National Guard in Brundidge.

-- Photos by Mickey Welsh, Advertiser

About 2,400 Alabama Guard members are on active duty as the nation prepares for possible war against Iraq.



Staff Sgt. Bernard Martin salutes during the singing of the national anthem during the deployment ceremony Saturday in Brundidge.

Destruction of the space shuttle Columbia earlier in the day injected unexpected sadness into the Saturday afternoon ceremony.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions and U.S. Rep. Terry Everett, who joined local officials, mentioned the shuttle tragedy during their remarks, but they concentrated on the reason for the third mobilization of the 900th in the past 40 years.

Sessions noted that Iraq has not lived up to its promises of 12 years ago when it was defeated during the Gulf War, "and we've got evidence they were actually continuing their efforts to develop an atomic bomb."

"It's a plain violation of the resolution they agreed to," Sessions said. "We're tired of sending our planes over the no-fly zones and having them shot at for the last decade. We're going to have, once and for all, an end to this."

Col. George Lee, who is chief of staff in the Alabama National Guard and accompanied Adjutant General Mark Bowen to Brundidge, declined to say where the unit would be stationed, but he said its mission is critical to national security.

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AETC Bases News Clips

LUKE AFB, AZ



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Noise of jets is freedom's ring

This letter is in response to the article ("Luke seeks wider disclosure area," West Valley Community, Jan. 25): I would just like to say to those people who make those complaints about the jet noise, that if it weren't for those planes flying overhead, they wouldn't have the right to complain.

I would like to know if any one of them complained when terrorists took over commercial flights and our boys were called upon to patrol the skies from further acts of terrorism. And if we go to war with Iraq, I bet those same people would be supportive of our boys flying into hostile territory, putting their lives on the line, to protect the rights and freedoms of all of us.

But God forbid that they fly a few miles near or above your house — that would be just terrible. I'm sure they didn't mean to interrupt your quality time in front of the TV. It never ceases to amaze me that people are so ready to send our boys into war at the drop of a hat but can't stand the fact that those same boys have to fly a few miles near or around their house. How hypocritical, they look to the military to support and defend our way of life only if it doesn't inconvenience them.

I enjoy the noise; to me, that's the sound of freedom flying overhead. The noise from the F-16's flying over my house are a comfort to me because I know those pilots are training to protect all of us.

What ever happened to researching an area before you buy a house, or are people just buying, moving in, and then complaining because they didn't do their homework? I think developers and sellers should tell people about the noise from the base. If they still buy the house, knowing full well that they are now living near an Air Force base, then they have no good reason to complain.

I'm all for expanding the noise zone. The mission at hand is to keep Luke open and stop further encroachment by greedy developers. Come on people, this is our military, the defenders of the best country in the world. How about showing a little more support.

Ronnie Gaskill
Surprise

The Arizona Republic

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Maxwell AFB, AL



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Conference honors Columbia

The Alabama Baptist State Convention Evangelism Conference begins with a prayer for the crew

By Neil Probst

Montgomery Advertiser

Church congregations across the tri-county area paused Sunday to pray for the seven astronauts who died Saturday aboard the space shuttle Columbia.

"We had, at the beginning of each service, a special prayer," said the Rev. Lester Spencer, pastor of St. James United Methodist Church in Montgomery.

While local church leaders led their flocks in reflection, the disaster coincided with a two-day gathering of Southern Baptist church officials from across the state.

The Alabama Baptist State Convention Evangelism Conference began Sunday evening at Garrett Coliseum, and organizers quickly responded to Saturday's tragedy by inviting the public to join them at a memorial service for the astronauts and their families.

"When you see the stars, remember that they left their legacy written in them," Gov. Bob Riley told the crowd as the conference began.

Sammy Gilbreath, the conference's director, told the crowd there was no way that marking the disaster could be left out of the conference.

Before Riley spoke, a drum and horn tune played over a speaker, and pictures of each astronaut came across a large-screen television.

Several people had come to the conference to remember the astronauts, but hundreds already had planned to be present anyway to enjoy worship and a lengthy list of speakers.

Bill and Jean Lovett of Prattville came because of the memorial, and to see old friends. Bill served 22 years in the National Guard.

"We listen to our husbands enough. We want to hear some good preaching," Dorothy Johnson said jokingly.



Members of the Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base Honor Guard firing party stand in the wings of Garrett Coliseum on Sunday during the opening rally of the Alabama Baptist State Convention Evangelism Conference. The opening doubled as a memorial service for victims of the space shuttle Columbia disaster. The guard fired a 21-gun salute.

-- Photos by Mickey Welsh, Advertiser

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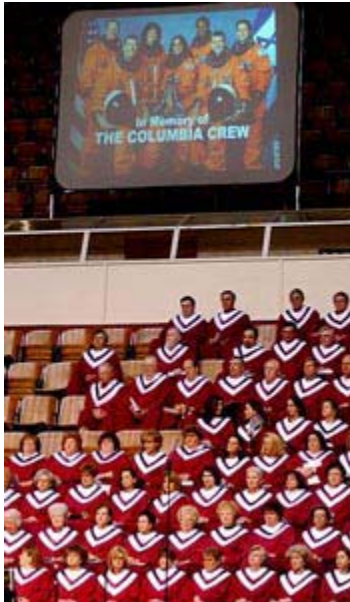


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A slide presentation on the space shuttle Columbia is shown Sunday at Garrett Coliseum.

Johnson's husband, Walter, is pastor of Jones Baptist Church in Autauga County, and she was enjoying the company of Danielle and the Rev. Glenn Langner, pastor of Shady Grove Baptist Church in Burnsville, in Dallas County.

Gilbreath said 3,200 churches across the state are part of the convention, and people from all over were at Sunday's service.

"Any memorial service is humbling. It makes you think how precious and fragile life is," said Staff Sgt. Jason Buchanan, assistant flight chief of the Maxwell-Gunter Honor Guard, which posted colors at the ceremony.

"My heart sank," said retired Gen. Burney Enzor of Greenville.

"We will have to ask 'Why?' briefly, and then move on," said Enzor, who was state chaplain for the Alabama National Guard from 1981-1992 and worked for three years as chief chaplain of the U.S. Army National Guard.

Four choirs participated in Sunday's service.

"It (the disaster), has affected, I feel, everybody in the world. It's such a tragedy," said Minnie Stringer, who was leading a choir composed of members of Montgomery's St. Stephens Baptist Church and Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church.

East Memorial Baptist Choir of Prattville and the Eastmont Baptist Choir of Montgomery also performed.

"Our hearts go out for those that were lost in that mission," said the Rev. Larry Hudson, pastor of Church of God Pentecostal in Montgomery.

Hudson said the church will have a moment of reflection for the space shuttle crew and their families at the congregation's Wednesday service.

"We're praying that God will strengthen the families and comfort them in their hours of bereavement," Hudson said.

Mayor Bobby Bright, a deacon at First Baptist Church on Perry Street, said he was happy to be at the conference.

"This is like welcoming a part of my family to the city," he said.



Gov. Bob Riley speaks Sunday at Garrett Coliseum, where an evangelism conference doubled as a space shuttle Columbia memorial.

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LUKE AFB, AZ



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Cities object to Luke-plan elements

**PATRICK O'GRADY
and BRIAN POWELL**
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Luke Air Force Base should stay in the West Valley, but not at the risk of continued growth in the region, in the official views of El Mirage and Surprise.

That's the opinion reflected in responses to an Arizona Department of Commerce effort to look at land-use compatibility with the base.

Both councils voted on strongly worded statements last week to submit to the Commerce Department and its effort to develop the Western Maricopa County/Luke Air Force Base Regional Compatibility Plan. The statements were very clear that both cities seek to retain Luke operations, but that several elements of the draft plan, including restricting development for much of the West Valley to less than two homes per acre, would not work.

"Parts of the original plan said Surprise shouldn't build any more, and that's unfeasible," said Surprise Councilman Tom Allen, who has been an outspoken supporter of Luke.

The Department of Commerce has been working on the plan for more than six months. In December, officials invited groups of various stakeholders — including landowners, city and base officials and the development community — to public sessions where they talked about methods of preserving Luke.

While there were good points about the plan, most have objected to two compatibility areas planned around the base that would limit housing. Surprise officials, discussing the plan last week, said they would have to implement major revisions of the city's general plan to meet the requirements of the preservation plan — and Luke officials were asked to participate in drafting the Surprise General Plan.

El Mirage's two-page letter, signed by the mayor and Common Council, strongly implies that the town would be devastated by implementation of the plan. The letter postulates that the plan would cause lost educational and job opportunities and impede economic development "and the chance for El Mirage's economic survival itself."

Mayor Robert Robles said the city has a good working relationship with base officials, but this plan would cause too much harm to the city.

"The only thing I'm saying is for everyone to stop and take a look at what is happening to El Mirage — our hands are just about tied," Robles said. "Meet us halfway at least, in order to bring revenue into the city and keep city services for our residents."

The letter said El Mirage already feels the impact of Luke's proximity by losing school sites, which affects property values. The preservation plan would also dampen opportunities for state and federal grants related to planning and urban development, the letter said.

El Mirage officials have called the plan unfair for the city in that the proposed plan would "impose the greatest burden on the community with the greatest proportion of minority population and the lowest median family income," the letter said.

What the preservation plan overlooked may be the one thing that can save the base from encroachment, Surprise officials said.

"The only thing that's going to save Luke is if the cities and county work together," said Surprise Mayor Joan Shafer.

Allen said all West Valley cities will have to work together with developers to protect the base.

"We'll do everything that we need to do to keep Luke around," Allen said.

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Sheppard AFB, TX



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Changing of the guard

Defense Department employees trained as security for Sheppard

By John Ingle
Times Record News
February 1, 2003

Tony Diniz stood in front of Sheppard Air Force Base's hospital gate Thursday morning as the sun began to peek over the horizon.

As vehicles began to crawl up to the gate, Diniz located the base sticker, raised his left hand and motioned for the driver to enter the base.

That scene isn't too different from what most people are used to seeing. But there is a major difference - Diniz isn't a bona fide active duty gate guard.

He's a Department of Defense guard who has been hired and trained by the 82nd Security Forces Squadron to help secure the base.

"We were welcomed with open arms," the former Air Force aerospace physiologist said. "They're so short (on manpower), they're glad for the extra help."

Diniz and Anthony Metiz are the first two Defense employees to begin taking on some of the duties of regular personnel.

After a two-week training course, the two have become certified Defense officers, a trend that is becoming commonplace at bases across the country.

Capt. Jasin Cooley, operations officer for the 82nd SFS, said 11 more Defense personnel are expected to scatter throughout the base over the next couple of weeks to begin guard duty.

"They still have the same authority," he said. "But their scope of responsibility is different."

More requirements to secure the base prompted 82nd Training Wing Commander Brig. Gen. Arthur Rooney to look at a new means of providing quality security for base personnel and those who live there, Cooley said. The funds used to pay for the Defense guards come from the base, not from headquarters, he said.

Before the Defense employees were hired, the base was forced to pull active duty members from their units to provide security. Although the help was welcomed, Cooley said it wasn't the best situation.

"That works out fine, but every other unit is paying for it," he said of augmenting security forces with other base personnel.

Now that reinforcement is on the way, Cooley said medics, mechanics and machinists can return to their squadrons.

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Changing of the guard, Con't.

Diniz said law enforcement isn't new to him. Before taking the position with the Defense Department, the Illinois native and Air Force brat - a common term for children who grew up in the military - worked at the James V. Allred Unit as a prison guard.

Before that job, he earned his peace officer certification through then Vernon Regional Junior College's police academy.

Metiz, a veteran of the Army, was given the duty of signing visitors in and producing a visitor's pass for non-base personnel on his second day.

But he said he would move out to the base's various guard shacks soon.

"I was always intrigued with the security aspects of the base," he said. "When you mention security, you know what you're doing."

Although the two-week training session might seem short, Metiz said his trainers covered all aspects of what he would be doing. Even to the extent of the use of deadly force if necessary.

"The training that I received here was pretty adequate," he said. "They crossed their T's and dotted their I's as far as training goes."

Perhaps the largest benefit of his job doesn't come from personal gratification, but the lessening of burdens on active duty security personnel, he said.

Airmen at the base have had to work longer hours in addition to training on their days off, Metiz said.

Cooley said the appointment of Defense personnel is scheduled to last for two years. Since salaries are coming from base funds, the captain said the base would re-evaluate the financial situation and cost of continuing the program.

Once they hit the four-year mark, he said base officials would more than likely request funding from the Air Force to continue the service.

In addition to the Defense guards, Cooley said guardsmen and reservists are scheduled to arrive at the base Feb. 11 to help with duties.

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Vance AFB OK



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Ties to Vance

By: Scott Fitzgerald, Staff Writer

February 02, 2003



The American flag (above) flies at half-staff in honor of Columbia Saturday. (Staff Photo by JOE RICKETS)

2 of 7 astronauts killed trained in Enid at Vance AFB.

Saturday's tragic loss of life aboard space shuttle Columbia was felt strongly at Enid's Vance Air Force Base.

Two of the seven astronauts aboard - Air Force Col. Rick Husband, Columbia's commander, and payload commander Lt. Col. Michael P. Anderson - graduated from undergraduate pilot training at Vance in the 1980s.

A third Vance graduate, Col. Eileen Marie Collins, was to be commander of the next shuttle mission aboard Atlantis, which was to launch March 1. It is not known if that launch will take place as scheduled.

"The loss of these great American heroes affects all of us. On behalf of Vance Air Force Base, I wish to express our deepest condolences to the loved ones of the entire crew of the shuttle Columbia. They honorably served their country and they will not be forgotten," said Col. A.J. Stewart, 71st Flying Training Wing commander at Vance.

Husband and Anderson didn't just graduate with their respective flying training classes. They finished near the top with high academic marks.

Husband, 45, was an Amarillo, Texas, native and received a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering from Texas Tech University in 1980. While at Tech, he earned an Outstanding Engineering Student award.

Commissioned a second lieutenant in the Air Force, Husband arrived in Enid shortly after graduation from college. He was a distinguished graduate in his pilot training class, finishing in the top 10 percent of his class in 1981, according to Vance records.

Husband flew the F-4 and was an F-15 aerial demonstration pilot, as well as an exchange test pilot with the Royal Air Force. Husband was selected as an astronaut candidate by NASA in December 1994.

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2 of 7 astronauts killed trained in Enid at Vance AFB, Con't.

He was a crew member of the STS-96 Discovery mission in 1999 and assisted with the first docking with the international space station.

Col. Keith Snyder who is current 71st Operations Group commander at Vance, graduated from pilot training with Husband.

"My thoughts and prayers go out to Col. Husband and to all the family members of the shuttle Columbia. These were great American heroes," Snyder said from Washington, D.C., on Saturday.

Anderson, 43, of Spokane, Wash., was not just part of the top. He was the top.

After graduating from University of Washington in 1981 with a bachelor of science degree in physics/astronomy, Anderson was commissioned a second lieutenant and did service in Mississippi and Texas before he arrived at Vance in 1986 to attend undergraduate pilot training.

When he graduated from Vance on Aug. 28, 1987, Anderson received the academic award for earning the highest marks in the class.

Anderson rose the ladder, flying various models of the KC-135 and the T-38A aircraft.

He also was an instructor pilot in the 920th Air Refueling Squadron, Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Mich., and with the 380 Air Refueling Wing, Plattsburgh, Air Force Base, N.Y.

Selected by NASA in December 1994, Anderson reported to Johnson Space Center in March 1995.

He was a crew member in January 1998 on Space Shuttle Endeavour of the STS-89, the eighth Shuttle-Mir docking mission.

Collins graduated from pilot training at Vance in 1979 and was a T-38 instructor pilot until 1982. She became an astronaut in 1991.

She became the first female shuttle pilot in 1995 and the first female shuttle commander in 1999 aboard the Columbia. She also was shuttle pilot on a mission in 1997.

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Letters to the Editor

So-called jet noise 'music to our ears'

Have you ever complained or heard a friend or neighbor complain about the "noise" of the jets at Vance, when they begin their day of training or flying overhead when you are in your yard?

I'm here to tell you, that so-called noise should be "music to our ears!" Have you ever stopped to think what Enid would be like without that noise? Believe me, without that noise every day, we wouldn't need street repair, schools improvement and upgrades or new businesses. Enid might be able to survive Vance closure, but at what price? Remember the oil bust!!! Goodness knows, Greg Allen is doing everything he can to bring more business and more jobs to Enid, but he can't do it alone. Thank you, Greg. It takes all the citizens of Enid to save Vance and a good start is a "Yes" vote on Feb. 11. As a small business owner in Enid, I know what Vance means to my business. We must preserve Vance and if it takes additional taxes to improve streets and schools, providing funds to win against Vance closure, and making our city a more beautiful place for all to live, then let's do whatever is necessary. Besides voting yes, let's all do our part by taking special care of our own neighborhoods. Every little bit helps. Pride in our homes, and pride in our town is the key. In 2005, when we are told what an important base Vance is, and what a caring, supporting city Enid is, we will all feel that pride, knowing the assistance we each had in Vance staying in Enid. Vote Yes!

Margie Scott
Anytime Airport Shuttle
Enid

News & Eagle cries 'BRAC' every time tax is voted upon

Years ago I read the fable about the young boy who was sent out to the hills to guard the village's flock of sheep. He was to sound the alarm and call the villagers if the wolf should attack the flock. However, he became bored and yelled "wolf" when no wolf was around. At first the villagers came running, which provided him some excitement.

However, he continued to cry "wolf" until the villagers no longer responded, even when the wolf really came to eat the sheep.

Now, we have a parallel condition in Enid. The "boy," the Enid News & Eagle, cries "BRAC" every time a new tax is to be voted upon! And eventually the result is going to be the same.

By the way, has the Enid News & Eagle's editorial staff ever seen a local tax increase which they didn't like?

Austin Wade
Enid

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Maxwell AFB, AL



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Astronaut attended school at Maxwell

"As they boarded the shuttle, each of the crew members showed tremendous courage and heroism in their search for knowledge."

—Bob Riley, governor of Alabama

By Neil Probst
Montgomery Advertiser

Col. Rick Husband, commander of the space shuttle Columbia that disintegrated in the skies over Texas on Saturday, attended Squadron Officer School at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base, local Air Force officials confirmed.

Husband's biography at the NASA Web site lists the



Husband school as one of his special honors, and local Air University officers confirmed that no other such school exists in the United States.

"It can be done by correspondence," said Lt. Col. Andy White, director of Air

Columbia Commander Col. Rick Husband learned leadership skills in Alabama

university public affairs. "Most of the people, in fact, attend in residence."

Eighty percent of all Air Force captains attend the school, said Lt. Col. Donald Lamontag, commander of Air University.

"The whole country is traumatized about this," he said.

Lamontag said the Squadron Officer School teaches Air Force officers leadership skills. "There is a large focus on individual leadership skills," Lamontag said.

After completion of F-4 training in September 1982, Husband was assigned to Moody Air Force Base, Ga., flying the F-4E.

From September to November 1985, he attended F-4 Instructor School at Homestead Air Force Base, Fla., and was assigned as an F-4E instructor pilot and academic instructor at George Air Force Base, Calif., in December 1985.

In December 1987, Husband was assigned to Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., where he attended the Air Force Test Pilot School.

Upon completion of Test Pilot School, Husband served as a test pilot flying the F-4 and all five models of the F-15.

Husband has received the Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the National Defense Service Medal and two NASA Group Achievement Awards.

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